

Christianity and Crisis

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America's Decision

THE decision about the Marshall Plan may well be the great post-war decision for America. During the war it was generally supposed that the one point for concentration after the war would be the turning away from isolation through full support of the United Nations. But the nation was quite well prepared for that step, and there was not as great danger of our failure there as there is now of our failure in connection with the rehabilitation of Europe through the implementation of the Marshall Plan. Also, it is probable that if we do fail in this matter, there will not be enough health or freedom in the world to preserve the United Nations from futility. So, is there not good reason to say that if it was right for the churches of America to use their influence to organize public opinion in favor of the San Francisco charter, it is now their responsibility to lead in the formation of a public opinion that will insist on action to meet the desperate need of Europe?

The Marshall Plan is a great advance on the Truman Doctrine. There is no reason why it should divide the churches as was the case with the Truman Doctrine. It is basically constructive and it would be sound policy even if there was no threat of the extension of Communism in Europe. It was offered at the outset to both eastern and western Europe and it was Russia's decision, against the will of the nations in her orbit, that has turned the Marshall Plan into an issue that sharpens the division of Europe between East and West. Unfortunately much of the support for the Plan in this country is based primarily upon hostility toward Russia. Those of us who believe that the American people should help to give every country within reach an alternative to Communism may still seek to counteract the prevailing hysteria about Russia and Communism, especially that type of hysteria that has its roots in fear of the Communist threat to Capitalism; and we may still seek to disarm the fear of America that is at least one factor in the expansive policy and in the frantic polemics of the Russians.

The Marshall Plan is, in a sense, not a plan, but a process by which a plan will be developed. It was

a master stroke on the part of Secretary Marshall to leave the initiative up to the Europeans themselves. The report of the sixteen nations is not only an essential guide to American action, but it is also the beginning of quite new possibilities for the life of Europe, for the economic unity of as much of Europe as can be united under present conditions. The very procedure by which that report was prepared represents a running start in cooperation between the sixteen nations that carries great promise.

There is a basic difficulty that underlies the American approach to Europe: on the one hand, extensive aid to Europe on our part must involve conditions, but to set conditions for aid is to put ourselves in the position of controlling the policies of European nations. There is no way out of this dilemma, for unconditional aid would be politically impossible, and it probably would be irresponsible. When Mr. Clayton made certain conditions explicit before the Paris report was completed, he provoked some resentment, but his action was necessary and he avoided any insistence upon a retreat from Socialism as one of the conditions. So far, this exceedingly delicate matter has been well handled by our government, because it did leave the essential planning to the Europeans and it did avoid laying down humiliating conditions. The aim of the Marshall Plan to help Europe to gain freedom from dependence upon us is statesmanship of the highest order. It is inevitable in this situation, with the American power dominant in the world and with proud nations for a time dependent on it, that there will be misunderstanding and strained feeling on both sides. Within the Christian community, there should be a perspective that will correct the American tendency to throw her power around without consideration for the dignity or the needs of other nations, and that will help the Europeans to understand the nature of our own dilemma.

The greatest threat to the Marshall Plan is not that it will be wholly defeated in a direct encounter by those who oppose it: it is that the plan may be sabotaged.

One form of sabotage is delay. It is an absurdity

that when Congressional committees are called to discuss the problem of emergency aid for Europe, they are not to meet until after November 1st. The President and the Congressional leaders have yet to show that they realize how much can be lost by delay.

Another form of sabotage is that when the Congress does act, its appropriations may be so meager that they will not do more than provide some immediate relief. James Reston emphasizes the difference between the cost of relief and the cost of the rehabilitation of Europe. If Congress is cautious and niggardly, the plan to give a new start and a new hope to Europe will fail even though some Europeans may be saved from starvation for the moment. It is cooperation by us with the plans for the rebuilding of the economy of Europe on a co-operative basis that will cost us the estimated \$15,081,000,000 over a period of four years. It should be remembered that that figure represents a considerable reduction of the original estimate on the advice of the State Department, and that it optimistically presupposes that help will come also from the agricultural sections of Europe under Russian domination.

The plan may also be sabotaged by crippling amendments or by humiliating conditions. Senator Taft's suggestion that aid should be given only to individual nations would undermine the plan as a stage in the economic unification of Europe. For Congress to attach conditions that call for a return to private enterprise as the dominant form of economic organization would be an unwarranted interference with the institutions of independent nations, and it would be a sign that the worst fear of Europeans about America is real, the fear that we are seeking to force upon them a system and an ideology that most of them reject almost as decisively as they reject Communism. It is alarming that both Harold Stassen and the National Association of Manufacturers suggest a condition of this sort, and that there is much loose talk about not helping to underwrite European Socialism.

The final way in which the Marshall Plan may be sabotaged is that the American people may not discipline themselves strictly enough to provide the food that is necessary for Europe. Or the shipment of food abroad might cause so great a rise in prices as to turn many people against the whole program and hence endanger it. All of the attempts to persuade Americans to practice self-control voluntarily and individually are likely to prove inadequate. We cannot afford to run the risk of a continued spiraling of prices, the risk both to our

economy and to the Marshall Plan itself. Moreover higher prices are a form of rationing that favors those who are able to pay and works great hardship for those with low or even moderate incomes. Already the health authorities in New York are noticing signs of quite widespread malnutrition as a result of high food prices. The rationing, perhaps at the producer's level, of a few scarce and essential foods would seem to be necessary in the interest of aid for Europe, in the interest of just distribution at home, and in the interest of a stable economy.

There is one confusion in this area on which Christians should speak decisively. They should reject the false assumption that the individual's voluntary sacrifice belongs on a higher level than the *voluntary* choice of the community to ration itself by law. The latter can also be a voluntary act, willed by most of the people because they know that it will alone secure the needed results. There is too much self-deception about purely individual self-control in such matters, because it is so easy to be satisfied with some gesture of sacrifice that is actually too small for the purpose. It shows *sounder* self-understanding to know that one needs to be rationed by law. Also, the will to make sacrifices may be easily undercut by a sense of futility if there is a conspicuous minority that fails to co-operate.

It is not enough to support the Marshall Plan in general. It is equally important to resist those who would sabotage it. It is hard to see how there can be another chance for a free Europe or for a peaceful world if that plan fails. Its cost is small compared with the cost to America if Europe is not delivered from hunger and despair. Its purpose is one that for Christians is a compelling obligation.

JOHN C. BENNETT

NOTE: The food situation in Germany is becoming increasingly desperate. The Emergency Committee for German Protestantism, Rev. Frederick J. Forell, Secretary, is organized to receive contributions to bring American Christians in touch with needy and worthy German Protestants. They are receiving names of especially worthy cases from Pastor Niemoeller. Contributions may be made to: Rev. Frederick J. Forell, Secretary, Emergency Committee for German Protestantism, 325 Central Park West, New York 25, New York.

Holland and Indonesia*

HENDRIK KRAEMER

BEFORE the eyes of the whole world Holland is in the balance while our nation is divided as never before in its judgment and in taking sides. An unrestrained dissension prevails: nation, church and family—they are all divided. We do not understand each other any longer, and what is worse, we do not want to understand each other. Practically we may say that an (as yet) unbloody civil war is fought in the Netherlands with regard to the Indonesian issue. The parties treat each other as enemies, not as opponents. We are in the predicament of a Gordian knot, which cannot be cut without disastrous consequences and which demands nevertheless a speedy disentanglement.

It is a depressing fact that our nation cannot find the power to act, proportionate to the mighty historical factors, by which the events are defined. A political crisis of this extent requires a moral act. In this special case it is demanded of the Dutch people to conquer themselves. This is what we mean when we say that the Netherlands are in the balance and from this point of view we wish to consider the Indonesian issue. All self-complaint and self-justification are beside the point. As the most experienced partner, it may be demanded of the Netherlands to cooperate wholeheartedly with, and to fight for, the establishment of a free Indonesia, which will be able to develop independently into a prosperous and sovereign constitutional state, cooperating in true readiness and united with the Netherlands, without our expecting for the time being that Indonesia has the same understanding of the spiritual and material interest of the Netherlands.

The Linggadjati agreement is only pretense, if this willingness is not present. It may be that for many this sounds unreasonable, but this is the matter with which we have to deal. And perhaps it seems less unreasonable when we think of the fact that for centuries Indonesia was the object of Dutch self-interest. We shall have to admit, in order to find the right attitude, that through our confused, well-intentioned, bad and sinful acts elementary events occur in which higher decisions and judgments are taking place.

The decision to order the Dutch army into action against the Indonesian Republic on July 20, 1947,

is the all-important fact to the present situation. Through this decision not only the situation has changed, but also the state of the Indonesian problem. The Dutch government took this decision with great inner reluctance and in the true conviction that there was no other way out but this leap in the dark.

It is evident that the government really meant a police-action and did not want a colonial war.

Furthermore it is evident that the conduct of the Republic has largely contributed to bring the Dutch government in this emergency.

In politics, however, good intentions never justify an unjust action.

The government had already chosen: the complete liquidation of the colonial relationship.

In the light of that choice the decision of July 20, taken however reluctantly and with the best intentions, was a fatal decision. The government fostered the delusive idea that all this would bring a solution, while, taking into account conditions in Asia, it was the reverse of a solution. It may be true that the economical and military position of the Netherlands in Java was so precarious that swift action had become inevitable. It was, however, a naive illusion to assume that this action would help bring about a solution of the major political problem: the establishment of this voluntary cooperation and unity between the Netherlands and Indonesia. On the contrary, the military action could only contribute to certain or almost certain frustration of this solution. The naive illusion found expression in the term "police action." The government did not intend to start a war and least of all a colonial war, but seeing the objective situation in Asia and the Republic, it could only work as a colonial war and as an act of aggression. Violence evokes violence, because it is impossible for the attacked party to assume that his destruction is not aimed at.

In this connection two capital things must not be forgotten.

In the first place, that important groups in the Netherlands and Indonesia, through their attitude and their utterances, could only rouse the conviction in the Republic, that the preservation of the powerful and authoritative position of the Netherlands, at most in a changed form, was pursued and that the recognition of an independent republic was renounced.

In the second place, that though the conduct of the Republic may be rightly criticized, we were confronted by a political power whose sovereignty was acknowledged by us and which was firmly resolved to defend the acquired independence and freedom to the bitter end. With a powerful Dutch army near

* We are pleased to present this article, taken from the Dutch Christian monthly, *Wending*, by the well-known Christian missionary leader, Dr. Hendrik Kraemer. Dr. Kraemer is the leader of the Christian minority which is critical of the Dutch Government's policy toward Indonesia. His political, as well as his religious influence, is very great in Holland, but the position here taken is not shared by the religious parties of Holland, either the Catholic or Protestant. It is the position of the Labor Party, which Dr. Kraemer helped to organize.

at hand the negotiations were bound to fail on the issue of police force. A police action which had all the airs of a real war, could only be regarded and answered as large-sized aggression.

Behind the fiction of a police action is an attitude of a pedantic schoolmaster who thinks that he must bring naughty boys to their senses in their own interests.

We cannot but conclude that the solution of the great political problem has been fatally undermined by the decision of July 20, if not altogether made impossible.

Then I wish to call to mind the atmosphere in which the army was trained, the unaltered colonial mentality in many Dutch circles, the too little determined attitude of the government to carry out its own program, and last of all the way in which public opinion was influenced so that it was represented as if the infinitely patient Holland which aimed at a loyal execution of the Linggadjati agreement was confronted by a Republic which was merely unwilling and rebellious.

What was the attitude of the Dutch people in this crisis? I wish to define this attitude as a blindness to the elementary power of an urge for freedom and independence in Asia. The vital point is, whether that urge for freedom is taken seriously or not. The second world-war has revealed a completely different Asia than we had ever known. It is no longer an appendix of the West, but has acquired a place of its own among the world powers.

Our people is a prey of a grotesque attitude in its treatment and judgment of the Indonesian problem. Grotesque because a small country as the Netherlands ought to act with tact and wisdom in the revolutionary Asiatic world, if it is to have a chance of making a future there. It is grotesque, as one fails to see that the Asiatic peoples, whether this is openly expressed or not, do not longer wish to be guided by us. Our way of thinking and acting with regard to an awakening Asia leads at the best to *one* future: to maintain ourselves by force in a partly hidden, partly openly rebellious Indonesia. The best intention will not be able to prevent, then, that we shall be compelled, against our will, to have one of the most rigorous forms of colonial regime. This grotesque attitude, in which our people are continually backed and in which the government, in spite of adverse intentions, is driven by the decision of July 20, is a disastrous folly.

It would be firmer and fairer if our people could conquer themselves to give their best forces of mind and heart to become in this new Asiatic and Pacific complex a freely-accepted and cooperating partner.

The only alternative is: no future at all, or a future "mit Schrecken," ending in complete failure.

It is very painful for a nation which lived so long within a safe neutrality, outside all international

storms, to be wounded in its national feelings, but if one is to cooperate in a new status in Indonesia, one will have to acknowledge that the past is irrevocably gone and one will not be allowed to keep the matter in a deadlock by considering the conflict stubbornly as an internal affair.

It is evident that a solution is not possible without arbitration.

So far we only treated the realistic side of the matter, with omission of all ideological views with regard to the Netherlands and Indonesia. Now, as a confessing member of the Christian church, I am going to take another course and turn away from the political sphere.

Seen from a religious level it is most alarming that, especially from the "Christian" side, voices are heard which are so appallingly heated and uncompromising. The representative "Christian" political parties and those who are influenced by them, show little or nothing of the inner reluctance which was undoubtedly present in the government, when it started the military action. On the contrary, one did one's utmost to reach that stadium and rejoiced at it. It is of course possible to ascribe this to the well-known fact that the "Christian" parties were declared opponents of the government policy of carrying on negotiations, and that these parties did not wish to negotiate and cooperate with the Republic before Dutch authority would be restored. After that the new structure of the state could be received as a gift from the hands of the Netherlands. As a Christian one was continually struck by the fact that in the "Christian" press—contrary to what might be expected of those who want to submit to Christ and His Spirit—the necessity was apparently never felt to open heart and conscience of the public to the fact that under cover of upholding authority, the un-reborn instincts of national pride, desire for power, economic interests, continuation of the colonial relationship may easily conceal themselves and be guiding factors.

Has it ever been asked with solicitude by the "Christian" parties if their words, inciting hatred and "Rechthaberei" may be maintained at the cross of Christ and that they perhaps also bar the hearts to hear God's voice in the present history? We do not say this in order to attack the "Christian" parties and those influenced by them as despised political opponents, but to adjure those, whom we regard in spite of all differences as fellow-Christians, not to forget what they are doing in rousing the fire of embitterment against Indonesia and the Indonesians. Can it be possible that, through all these confused events God is at work in taking Indonesia away from us as "a possession" and as "a right," so that he may give us a new place there, provided that we understand this and take it seriously, and that He will otherwise deservedly deprive us of it?

Without conquering the natural instincts our people will not be able to find a solution in this crisis. Would it not have been the normal way if the "Christian" organs and parties had been the guides in this conflict? Now they are the guides par excellence to an uncompromising self-maintenance, which can never be called Christian and which is politically sterile. It is my duty to say this as a Christian to a fellow-Christian.

I often hear it said: we start from principles, you only mention the facts. In these times of complete change, however, facts are for a Christian more than mere facts. They are for him signals from God, which remind him to apply his principles and standards in a new way.

When we see, humanly speaking, the impasse without any prospect in which Holland has brought itself through its management of the Indonesian issue, a Christian can only regard it as God's gift and mercy, if the political aim which we have in mind should be realized in times to come.

The Responsibility of the Rural Churches

RICHARD L. SNYDER*

"THE world is swung on its hinges, not so much by people who have both feet on the ground as by people who have 'one foot in heaven!'" So writes Dr. Paul Scherer in his Beecher Lectures. (p. 121) This has also been expressed in more theological terms by Professor Richard Niebuhr (in his chapter of Vol. III of the Interseminary Series). ". . . Irresponsibility or perversion of Christian social responsibility results from the substitution of human society itself for God-in-Christ. . . . The church . . . thinks of itself as responsible to society for God rather than to God for society." (p. 120) There is a strong suggestion of such "worldly responsibility" in much of the Christian rural life movement headed up by the Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council (The Federal Council of Churches and the International Council of Religious Education), and to be found in the Annual Rural Church Convocation, and such regional bodies as the New England Town and Country Church Commission.

The recently published "Commitment of Advance for Rural Churches in America" lists as first under the churches' services to the rural community the task of "Providing a Comprehensive Gospel." This churchly function seems to have both feet on the ground when it is described as presenting "the Christian gospel in its fullness in every rural com-

munity of America, making it function as a cohesive force in every area and interest of rural life, as: the development and integration of human personality; decision and commitment to the Christian way of life; Christian worship; Christian education; Christian fellowship and recreation; rural health; home and family life; rural art, literature, and dramatics; labor and economics." Where is the "one foot in heaven?"

Such an omnibus statement recalls the glowing phrases of the early days of the Social Gospel. These aims defy dissection but the reader can at least take note of the fact that the gospel is to be preached, not to reconcile man and God, but man to man and man with himself. It is half the gospel! This is the church being responsible to society.

Eleven other services of the rural churches to the people are listed and they all carry out this philosophy. Such objectives as elimination of discrimination, the promotion of land settlement, the spiritualization of rural culture are included. The basic undertaking of building a strong church involves, the reader is told, the strengthening of needy churches, broadening the geographical and population bases of the parish so as to correspond to the modern sociological community, and so on, "that the Christian message can be presented in its entirety, meeting the total needs of individual and community life, and investing thereon a Christian quality of life." In dealing with the subject of the rural ministry, the Commitment suggests that ministers be given a training "that is not primarily classical but, rather, professional, wherein the teaching of such subjects as Bible, homiletics and theology are rurally professionalized."

What is wrong with such a "Commitment for Advance"? One has only to live in rural America to know that these things are dreadfully needed. Rural America, and I suspect urban America too, has had only half the gospel preached in many of its churches. Both feet have been planted in heaven. The rural ministry, by and large, is dreadfully lacking in training and ability—it is a way station on the journey to success, a depository of incompetents, or a fine spot for retirement. Rural Christianity is a strange mixture of fundamentalism and the weakest type of liberalism—the one ignoring modern problems, the other approaching them with great idealism and little power. Nowhere is the standard of worship and religious art so low. This Commitment issued by the Committee on Town and Country is, I imagine, the reaction to these needs, and therefore understandable. But I, for one, fear for the churches if it should be taken seriously. There is in it a great disparity between the sense of responsibility toward God and of that toward society.

What is the Christian to do with this problem? He sees the imperative needs of rural life but he also

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sees that the first responsibility is to God. Compromise is not the solution. It lies in the recognition that the Christian and the church are responsible to both God and man. The Christian faith is not a vertical religion—an issue between God and man with a man's responsibility only Godward. Neither is it a horizontal religion—with responsibility solely manward. Dr. Fosdick somewhere makes use of the figure of a triangle as an illustration of the dual responsibility of the Christian. God is at the apex of the triangle and the other points are the individual and his brother. Christianity then is a matter of God and a man's relationship to Him, and of man's brother and his relationship to God and to man.

In the life of the rural churches this attitude will have some very definite applications. George MacLeod in his story of the Iona Community, *We Shall Rebuild*, tells us that "the church must be turned around." He writes that the St. Nicholas Parish Church in Liverpool, England, was built so that "to enter it was to turn your back on the market-place and the river" where the life of the city was to be found. Largely destroyed by the war's bombings it has been temporarily rebuilt "to face the other way." Now, instead of the Communion Table far away from the place where man's life was centered, "the Holy Table is . . . enlightened by the river and the market-place, as they in turn are challenged by the Holy Table." (p. 13) Rightly upset by a church life that always faced away from the life of the rural community, leaders have tried to solve the problem by centering the life of the churches upon the community, forgetting that the life of the community must be seen in the light of the Savior. We are urged by rural church leaders to turn the church around, but to place first a responsibility to society. The "church must be turned around," but only that the things of God and the things of man may meet. The first to be made alive in the second while the things of man are being judged by the things of God. There can be no preaching, no ministry that does not look both ways at once, Godward and manward, a feat impossible to a mere human but possible to a Christian.

Such a dual orientation of Christian responsibility will be marked by a deep concern for Christian doctrine—have we said that rural people cannot understand it? Then re-examine the Faith, for it began as a "rural" religion and its classic forms are not urban. There will also be present a renewed interest in and devotion to the Sacraments and an increased acquaintance with the Bible. In short, a churchly revival will come to rural America. Some of us resent Dr. Kraemer's phrase, "Let the Church be the Church," but it is the call to rural churches today. It is only as the Church is the Church that it can fulfill its dual responsibility toward rural society

and toward God. The rural churches must be concerned with community life. But what difference will all such fine objectives as those expressed in this "Commitment" make if God is not present? And He is not present in them alone.

It is the message of the Incarnation that in Jesus Christ met both God and man, and that in that "meeting" holiness became eternally inseparable from history and man's everyday life. The Incarnation cannot be preserved in man's experience by denying the church's concern with society nor by limiting Christian concern to society. Rural churches may prosper under such a program as has been officially suggested, but they will not prosper as Christ's churches, for they will be denying the message of the Incarnation. The Christ meets mankind at its point of greatest need because He was God in human form. The churches will meet rural America's greatest need when they keep one foot in heaven and the other in society.

Church of South India Formally Inaugurated

A new experiment in Christian church unity began in Madras with the formal inauguration of the Church of South India, which embraces all Protestant denominations in the area. The rites took place in St. George's Anglican Cathedral and were presided over by the Rt. Rev. Chirakarottu Korula Jacob, Bishop of Central Travancore.

The new church, which will comprise a Christian community of about 1,200,000, unites the four Anglican dioceses of Madras, Travancore, Tinnevely and Dornakal, the South India Provincial Synod of The Methodist Church, and the South India United Church. The latter body was itself a union of Presbyterian and Congregational Churches.

A packed congregation in the 130-year-old Madras cathedral, including 600 representatives of churches, missionary societies and Christian associations from all parts of the world, witnessed the solemn consecration of nine prelates who were named for episcopal sees in the United Church by a joint committee of Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Methodist churchmen.

Wearing white rockets with saffron robes, the bishops were led in procession before Bishop Jacob and two co-consecrators. Solemnly laying hands upon the kneeling bishops, the consecrators repeated over them the formula, "Receive the Holy Spirit for the office and work of bishop in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands." Each of the new bishops was then presented with a copy of the Bible and a pastoral staff.

Of the 14 bishops, who include five native Indians, seven were formerly of the Anglican Church, three were Congregationalists, two Presbyterians and two Methodists. One of the outstanding Indian prelates is Bishop Joseph, who belongs to a well-known family of Telugu Christians, and has written several devotional books and a number of Telugu hymns. (RNS)

The World Church: News and Notes

GERMANY: Statement Concerning the Political Course Taken by the German People

The Fraternal Council (Bruderrat) of the Evangelical Church in Germany (E.K.D.) published on August 8, 1947, a significant "Statement Concerning the Political Course Taken by the German People," which is herewith published in full because of its intrinsic importance and the light which it throws upon the German situation.

"1. We have been given the message of the reconciliation of the world with God in Christ. We must listen to this Word, accept it, act upon it and fulfill it. We are not listening to this Word, nor accepting it, nor acting upon it, nor fulfilling it, unless we are absolved from our common guilt, from our fathers' guilt as well as our own, and unless we follow the call of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, leading us out of all the false and evil ways into which we, as Germans, have strayed in our political aims and actions.

"2. We went astray when we began to dream about a special German mission, as if the German character could heal the sickness of the world. In so doing we prepared the way for the unrestricted exercise of political power, and set our own nation on the throne of God. It was disastrous to lay the foundations of our State at home solely on a strong government, and abroad solely on military force. In so doing we have acted contrary to our vocation, which is to cooperate with other nations in our common tasks, and to use the gifts given to us for the benefit of all nations.

"3. We went astray when we began to set up a 'Christian Front' against certain new developments which had become necessary in social life. The alliance of the church with the forces which clung to everything old and conventional has revenged itself heavily upon us. We have betrayed the Christian freedom which enables us and commands us to change the forms of life, when such a change is necessary for men to live together. We have denied the right of revolution; but we have condoned and approved the development of absolute dictatorship.

"4. We went astray when we thought we ought to create a political front of good against evil, light against darkness, justice against injustice, and to resort to political methods. In so doing we distorted God's free grace to all by forming a political, social and philosophical front, and left the world to justify itself.

"5. We went astray when we failed to see, that the economic materialism of Marxist teaching ought to have reminded the Church of its task and its promise for the life and fellowship of men. We have failed to take up the cause of the poor and unprivileged as a Christian cause, in accordance with the message of God's Kingdom.

"6. In recognizing and confessing this, we know that we are absolved as followers of Christ, and that we are now free to undertake new and better service to the glory of God and the welfare of mankind. It is not the phrase 'Christianity and Western Culture' that the German people, and particularly we Christians, need today.

What we need is a return to God and to the service of our neighbor, through the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"7. We have borne witness, and today we do so once again: 'Through Jesus Christ we experience a joyous liberation from the ungodly fetters of this world for free and grateful service to all whom He has created.' We therefore pray constantly: Do not let yourselves be overcome by despair, for Christ is Lord. Say good-bye to the indifference of unbelief; do not be led astray by dreams of a better past or by speculations about another war; but in freedom and all soberness realize the responsibility which rests upon us all to rebuild a better form of government in Germany, that shall work for justice and for the welfare, peace and reconciliation of the nations." E.P.S. Geneva.

ITALY: Synod of the Waldensian Church

On September 1st the Synod of the Waldensian Church held its inauguration ceremony. The chairman on this occasion was Professor Ernesto Comba and five candidates were consecrated for the ministry. There were many important questions on the agenda.

The church proposed to achieve the three following objects: (a) State neutrality with regard to religion; (b) freedom of conscience and personal equality before the law for non-Catholic citizens; (c) legal equality of religious services.

Of these three objects, the second is the only one which has been achieved (freedom of conscience and personal equality). The third object may still be partly achieved by means of the law which is to regulate the definite position of Evangelical institutions under the new Constitution. This is what the Waldensian Church and the other Evangelical Churches in Italy are striving to achieve through the commission appointed by the Federal Council of Churches.

The United Methodist Church again brought up the plan for union with the Waldensian Church, and asked the Waldensian Synod to explain its confession of faith (which is in accordance with that of La Rochelle) and to say what the united church should be called. The Synod replied to the first question by reassuring the Methodist Church about the freedom already enjoyed by the theological tendencies represented by Methodism within the Waldensian Church. As to the name of the united church, the Synod reminded the Methodist Church of the ecumenical value of the name of the Waldensian Church which represents both the pre-Reformation evangelical protest and the lay missionary spirit common to both churches.

In many towns pastors have been able to preside over large popular meetings of evangelism, in theatres or in public squares, and the audience seemed very impressed by the positive Christian witness contained in their message. In order to take advantage of this exceptional opportunity of spreading the Christian message, a definite program must be drawn up, and the Synod appointed a commission to prepare it. It also gave its approval to the establishment of a permanent camp in the mountains (the "Agape Village")—a plan

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carried out on the initiative of the Federation of Waldensian Unions.

The Synod re-appointed the present Moderator, Pastor Virgilio Sommani, for the next year. At a public meeting at the Church of Torre Pellice the delegates from the sister churches and from the World Council brought fraternal greetings from their respective congregations. (E.P.S. Geneva)

Niemöller Named Head of German Regional Church

Formation of a single *landeskirche* (regional church) to unite the three Evangelical Churches of the Frankfurt, Hessen and Nassau areas of Germany was unanimously approved at a two-day congress held in Friedberg, Germany, and attended by 120 delegates. The new church will be a unit of the Evangelical Church in Germany and will be known as the Evangelical Church of Hessen and Nassau.

By a vote of 84 to 36, the meeting elected Dr. Martin Niemöller as president of the new church, which will embrace about 1,500,000 German Protestants. The title of president, rather than bishop, was chosen to signify that the powers of the church's leader are derived from the people of the church as a whole.

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The new *landeskirche* is the first to be formed in Germany since the war. The churches of Frankfurt, Hessen and Nassau were forced to unite in 1933 under pressure of the Nazi regime, but after the war the union was dissolved and three provisional governments established. The action of the Friedberg meeting means that the churches have united once more, but this time of their own volition.

A further step to be taken by the Friedberg congress is the setting up of a provisional synod, pending the drafting of a constitution for the new church under which a permanent board of government will be appointed. (RNS)

Church Union Plan Completed in Ceylon

A basis of union for non-Roman churches in Ceylon has been completed by a negotiating committee meeting in Colombo, consisting of Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists and members of the South India United Church. Drawn up in the form of agreed resolutions, the report will now be considered by the various churches involved in the union plan.

According to the proposals in the report, elected bishops of the united church, who have not already been consecrated, will be consecrated, by three bishops from outside Ceylon, "from differing church traditions and acceptable to all the uniting churches." Immediately afterwards, they will receive, by prayer and laying-on of hands by ministers of all the uniting churches, "a wider commission to exercise their ministry in the united church."

The union scheme provides that presbyters of the united church will receive from the newly-consecrated and commissioned episcopate a form of "extended ordination." It sets forth a form of service for the "unification of ministries," the purpose of which is "to give to the ministers of each tradition such character, grace, gifts and authority as they may need."

Accepting Baptism and Holy Communion as "ordained by Christ as a means of grace by which we are united to God and through which God works in us," the report stipulates that only those who have received Baptism in the name of the Trinity may be members of the united church.

It approves the Old and New Testaments as the standard of faith, and declares that former confessions of faith of the uniting bodies may be used where they do not conflict with the doctrinal standards of the united church. (RNS)

We are receiving a large number of requests for subscriptions to "Christianity and Crisis" from Christian leaders in various countries in Europe and Asia who cannot pay for their subscriptions because of currency and other difficulties, but who would like to keep in touch with American thought through our journal. We are hoping, therefore, that some of our readers will send us contributions to cover the expense of such subscriptions. We have reason to believe that this would be a significant indirect contribution to the Ecumenical Movement.